

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes January 6, 2015
DDA Office, 150 S Fifth Ave, Suite 301 6 pm

Members Present: Ray Detter, Barb Wood

Members Absent: John Chamberlin, Kathleen Nolan, Joan French, Hugh Sonk, Jim Kern, Sue Kern, Marsha Chamberlin

Visitors: Susan Pollay, Steve Kaplan, Christine Crockett, Stefan Trendov

Last night our CAC meeting was devoted to discussion of recent downtown developments, particularly the unanimous decision of City Council Monday night to set new height limits for future development of the property on South Main and William bordered by South Fourth Avenue and Packard.

On Monday night the City Council unanimously approved two ordinance amendments providing that the property's 180-foot height limit would be replaced by new restrictions that would allow a future building to rise as high as 120 feet on the north end of the site. But the remaining southern portion will have a 60-foot height limit with a 15 foot set back from Packard and a 30 foot set-back (including the 16 foot alley) from the residential homes on S. Fourth Avenue to the east.

The Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council was heavily involved in the A2D2 (Ann Arbor Discovering Downtown initiative) Process that led in 2009 to the rezoning of Downtown Ann Arbor with greater height and intensity of use. In the last three years we have also been involved in the process of trying to correct the mistakes of that rezoning—most prominently recognized in out-of-town developers forcing us to approve the “by right” development of 413 East Huron.

In the process of many meetings over the last two years, the community, with the help of consultants, ENP (Perdu) Associates, recognized that the D1—180 foot buildings allowed in the Main Street overlay district was inappropriate for the property at South Main and Packard

Directly across the alley from the residential and historic S. Fourth properties to the east, many citizens believed that this William/S. Main/ Packard site should have been recognized as an “interface” location where D2 zoning-was appropriately designed to protect residential and historic structures outside the downtown's core.

We believe Monday night's unanimous City Council decision was a compromise that we can accept—knowing that the property owner will still have the possibility of developing a “Planned Project” within the approved D2 FAR on the site if proposed changes brought with them “public benefits” to the Ann Arbor community as well as a well-designed building that did not have a negative impact upon its neighbors.